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ABSTRACT

This monograph provides research-based information on the counseling needs of gifted and talented students, as well as effective counseling approaches to meeting those needs. Following an historical overview of counseling programs for the gifted, sections specifically address the self-concept of gifted and talented students, at-risk students, career counseling with gifted students, multipotentiality, counseling with families (addresses sibling relationships and the label "gifted"), parent-school interactions, underachievement, and school counseling programs for gifted students. A developmental approach to counseling with gifted students is strongly recommended. Required components for a developmental counseling program are listed and include: (1) an articulated and coherent rationale; (2) a program of activities based on the affective and cognitive needs of youngsters; (3) trained counselors who are well grounded not only in counseling but also in giftedness; (4) a minimum of attention to rehabilitative therapy services, but a strong component of individual, family, and teacher consultations; (5) input and participation from teachers, administrators, parents, and the youngsters who are served; and (6) a component for the continued professional development of the counselor so that he or she may keep pace with the latest research and practices on the counseling needs of gifted students. (Contains 81 references.) (CR)

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THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

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Counseling Gifted and Talented Students

Nicholas Colangelo
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

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THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

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Nicholas Colangelo is the Myron and Jacqueline Blank Professor of Gifted Education at The University of Iowa. He is also Director of The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development. He is author of numerous articles on counseling gifted students and the affective development of gifted. He has edited two texts: *New Voices in Counseling the Gifted* (with Ronald Zaffrann) and *Handbook of Gifted Education, Editions I, II, and III* (with Gary A. Davis). He has served on the editorial boards of major journals including *Counseling and Development, Gifted Child Quarterly, Journal of Creative Behavior, Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, and *Roeper Review*. He has presented a number of research papers at national and international conferences and has been a keynote speaker on numerous occasions. In 1991, he was presented with the Distinguished Scholar Award by the National Association for Gifted Children; in 1993, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Iowa Talented and Gifted Association; and in 1995, he received the Alumni Achievement Award presented by the School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1996-1997, he served as Executive Administrator for the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children. In 2000, he received the State of Iowa Regents Award for Faculty Excellence.

Counseling Gifted and Talented Students

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ABSTRACT

This monograph provides research-based information on the counseling needs of gifted and talented students, as well as effective counseling approaches to meeting those needs. The counseling needs of gifted students has had limited attention over the years compared to issues of identification, programming, and equity. Most educators and parents recognize that behind the exceptional ability are youngsters with complex social-emotional needs who are similar to other youth. In addition, they have needs quite unique to their giftedness and how this giftedness is accepted in their immediate environment, as well as the broader society. While this monograph is written with the counselor in mind, I believe it is relevant to all teachers, administrators, and parents who are continuously in the role of counselor.

Counseling Gifted and Talented Students

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

I began my work in gifted education with a focus on counseling needs in 1973 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison shortly after the Marland Report (1972), which brought gifted students to the consciousness of the nation. At that time, counseling and the focus on social-emotional needs was a rarity. Almost all attention was focused on identification issues and academic programming issues. As the years have passed, identification and academic programming have maintained their importance, and at times were overshadowed by issues such as teacher training, gender, ethnicity, inclusion, genetics vs. environment, and IQ vs. multiple forms of intelligences. Throughout these years of musical chairs regarding the in issue, the social-emotional needs of gifted has continued to be a solid, expanding concern, but never the star.

In 1973 you could count on one finger all the leaders in gifted education who made counseling issues their primary focus. In 2002 there is considerably more respect and attention for the social-emotional issues regarding gifted children (i.e., attention to counseling needs) than previously. A good example of today's attention on social-emotional issues is the publication of the NAGC book by Neihart, Reis, Robinson, and Moon (2002) titled *The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know?*

My research throughout the years has focused on several areas, but I have remained connected to counseling issues and social-emotional development. This monograph offers me an opportunity to share a distillation of research as well as my clinical insights based on years of working in counseling situations with students, parents, and educators.

Insights/Perspectives

A defining characteristic of counselors is their use of the qualifiers "seems" and "appears." For example, "It seems that Lisa is angry." "It appears that David is underachieving as a way to get attention." A counselor recognizes that an individual is complex and a composite of apparent paradoxes and thus does not want to make definitive statements that can be challenged. Gifted students, if nothing else, are complex. However, it does no good to pretend there are certain things we do not know when we do. Currently, we know considerably more about the social-emotional issues confronting gifted students based on research and clinical observation. To know something in the scientific sense does not mean it is an absolute or that it holds in a particular way in all circumstances. If this became a standard, we would know nothing. Scientific knowledge is an understanding of patterns and dispositions with the recognition that there are exceptions to all that we know about human behavior and development. As our research improves, exceptions become just that, rather than indices of the absence of a knowledge base. The following insights are based on a synthesis of research as well as my own observations/work over the past nearly three decades.

- Gifted students are typically as well adjusted as other peers.
- Social-emotional issues are present because of exceptional ability.
- In our society it is not smart to be smart.
- Meeting the cognitive needs of gifted students often meets simultaneously their social-emotional needs.
- Teenage years are the most difficult socially for gifted students.
- To be a gifted minority student is an added social challenge for these students.
- Intelligence is no assurance of character.
- Gifted students are not prone to suicide in any greater numbers than other students in their age group.
- Depression, anxiety, and isolation are among the common difficulties with gifted students.
- Gifted students do not have lower or more inflated self-concepts than nongifted age peers.
- Gifted students are more sensitive to the social needs of their nongifted peers than the reverse.
- The messages that students receive from society about exceptional talent are only ambivalent in regards to intellectual talent.
- Underachievement in schools by gifted students is a manifestation of a combination of social-psychological tensions.
- Parents do not always know what is best for their gifted children.
- It is possible to be gifted and disabled (or have a disorder) simultaneously.
- Children benefit from counselors as part of their development in schools. Gifted students get less than their share of counselor time and attention.

Self-Concept

The self-concept construct has deep historical roots in psychology and education. Self-concept can be viewed as a "powerful system of cognitive structures that is quite likely to mediate interpretation of and response to events and behaviors directed at or involving the individual" (Nurius, 1986, p. 435).

A number of studies (see Neihart, 1999) have indicated that there are no differences between gifted and nongifted students on measures of self-concept. Self-concept needs to be viewed as multidimensional (Colangelo & Assouline, 1995, 2000) and changes with schooling. Colangelo and Assouline (1995) found that:

- self-concept of gifted students is lower in high school than elementary school
- as gifted students progress in school they become more anxious and isolated
- gifted students have higher self-concepts in academic domains, and lower in interpersonal domains.

Closely related to self-concept is how students view their own giftedness. A study by Kerr, Colangelo, and Gaeth (1988) indicated that giftedness is seen by teenagers as a positive when it came to personal understanding and to performance in academics. However, they saw giftedness as a negative when it came to relations with peers.

Positive self-concept is associated with challenge-seeking, willingness to do hard work, take risks, and accuracy in evaluating one's performance (Neihart et al., 2002).

At-risk Students

Gifted students are vulnerable to a number of issues and situations that can hamper their cognitive as well as affective development. Gifted students are vulnerable to underachievement, defined as school attainment considerably below ability level (Neihart et al., 2002). The outcome of underachievement is always the same—performance below expectation. However, the reasons and sources for underachievement are varied and complex. They include social isolation, pressure to conform, under-curriculum, family dynamics, rebelliousness, learning/behavioral disabilities, attention-seeking, trauma, deliberate underachievement, and lack of goals and direction (Colangelo, Kerr, Christensen, & Maxey, 1993; Neihart et al., 2002; Peterson & Colangelo, 1996; Reis, 1998; Rimm, 1997).

There is concern about suicide and delinquency among gifted. The traumatic effects of suicide do not rely on numbers—one suicide is catastrophic. While the numbers of suicide among gifted are in no greater number than for other students (Neihart et al., 2002) counselors need to recognize signs and actively intervene for any student who appears at risk. Gifted students who are isolated, anxious, depressed, can be at risk for suicide. A cry for help must be heeded (Gust-Brey & Cross, 1999).

The research on delinquency among gifted students, like that on suicide, suggests no higher incidence than among other youngsters. Psychological problems can manifest themselves into anti-social and illegal behavior. Especially in the teenage environment, acceptance trumps reason and safety. There is some information based on self-reports by gifted students that they commit offenses but are seldom caught or taken to court (Neihart et al., 2002; Seeley, 1984).

The research on minority students has been rather consistent indicating that minorities (except for Asian-Americans) are underrepresented in gifted programs. African-American, Latinos, and Native-Americans are well aware of their minority presence in gifted programs and are conflicted about their participation in such programs. A most unfortunate phenomenon afflicts minority students and that is the association of academic excellence (e.g., gifted program) with "acting White" (Colangelo, 2001; McWorther, 2000). Gifted minority students deal with all the issues that other gifted students deal with and additionally, the ethnic issues of whether they belong in such programs and how they will be viewed by their ethnic group if they participate. We are missing highly capable minority students because they are conflicted about wanting to be found or identified.

Family Counseling

The family has been recognized as a primary and critical component in the development of talent (Bloom, 1985; Moon & Hall, 1998; Moon, Jurich, & Feldhusen 1998). Although research and writings have increased in the last 20 years (Colangelo & Assouline, 1995; Moon & Hall, 1998; Moon, Jurich, & Feldhusen, 1998), counseling with families of gifted is still an area of exceptional need and challenge. High ability students tend to come from families that are cohesive, child-centered, authoritative, and in which parents engage with their children (Neihart et al., 2002). By no mean does this mean that gifted children do not emanate from families that do not fit those descriptors (Colangelo & Assouline, 1995; Moon & Hall, 1998).

One of the important roles that parents assume is a relationship with their child's school. Parents of gifted children do not always have the skills to advocate effectively for

their children, nor the interpersonal skills to work well with school personnel. Parents are not always prepared to take on the challenge of a child who has different needs.

The identification of one child in a family as gifted changes the dynamics with other siblings who are not identified. Research has indicated that labeling a child gifted can have negative effects on siblings (Colangelo & Brower, 1987; Cornell & Grossberg, 1986; Grenier, 1985).

Transition From High School to College and Career Counseling

Gifted students do not always know what they want to do for the rest of their lives and intelligence does not necessarily translate into planning skills for college and career. Many gifted students will experience difficulty at this stage because of multipotentiality (Rysiew, Shore, & Carson, 1994). Rysiew, Shore and Leeb (1998) outline some of the main concerns in addressing mulitpotentiality:

1. Students find it hard to narrow their choices to one career since they have so many equally viable options.
2. Multipotential students may also suffer from perfectionism, thus they look for the perfect or ideal career.
3. Students feel coerced from parents and others to make decisions based on status and high earning potential.
4. Students must make commitments that may have long-term schooling (graduate, professional) and a delay of independence in terms of earning a salary as well as starting families. These long-term training investments are also emotionally perhaps, or financially difficult to change once a student has embarked for several years towards a particular career, even if there are serious doubts about the chosen career path.

A review of research and writings on career development of gifted students recommends the following for counselors (see Rysiew, Shore, & Leeb, 1998):

1. Remind students that they do not have to limit themselves to one career.
2. Use leisure activities as a way to continually develop areas of abilities and interest, apart from one's career.
3. Use career counseling as a value-based activity, exploring broad categories of life satisfaction.
4. Emphasize peer discussions and group work with other multipotential youth so that one can see that he/she is not alone with concerns.

Some gifted students have very focused career interests at an early age while others do not develop them until late high school or start of college. Research does not indicate an advantage to either. Career counseling should emphasize rigorous academic preparation and high aspirations (Neihart et al., 2002) since that will keep options open. Gifted students will eventually find their passion or niche—keeping options open is important. Research has indicated that females and minorities of high ability do not always have aspirations and career goals that are high and consistent with their abilities (Kerr, 1991; Neihart et al., 2002).

Counseling in Schools

While there are counselors and therapists in private practice or working in community outreach centers, no counselor will be in as much contact with gifted students as the school counselor. School is still the place where giftedness (for the most part) will either flourish or not. School counselors receive little specific training on the affective needs of gifted students and it is the very rare counselor training program that requires counselors to take a course on gifted students as a degree requirement. Thus school counselors are grounded in counseling but not in theories of giftedness.

Counseling in schools can be envisioned as either remedial or developmental. In remedial counseling, the emphasis is on problem solving and crisis intervention. With this approach the counselor is a therapist who helps correct problems. In developmental counseling, the counselor also has a therapist role, but the primary function is to establish an environment in school that is conducive to the educational (cognitive and affective) growth of gifted students.

Final Comments

Counseling gifted students and their families is one of the most challenging and rewarding functions for a counselor. Gifted students have tremendous variability not only in their cognitive capacity, but in their affective development. While there are clearly common themes to the social-emotional issues confronting gifted students, there are profound individual differences among gifted students. The business of school counselors is to help young people recognize who they are, make decisions, and develop their potential. Gifted students need the assistance and nurturing counselors can provide. It will be a sign of effective schooling when counselors regularly use their skills and expertise with gifted and talented students in their schools.

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Counseling Gifted and Talented Students[1]

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Introduction

Over the years there have been two main and conflicting views regarding psychological well-being of gifted students (Neihart, 1999). One view is that gifted children are generally very well adjusted at least as well adjusted as the general student population. From this stand point, there is little need for specialized school counseling for gifted students. Essentially, what gifted students need most is the typical counseling that is available in schools and their needs for counseling are not dependent on their giftedness but on whatever aspects of their personalities may need attention.

The other view is that giftedness brings with it an array of intrapersonal and interpersonal issues that are unique to their giftedness. Gifted students, by their very advanced cognitive abilities and intensity of feelings deal with issues about self and others in ways that are unique from the general population and therefore require specialized understanding. Interpersonally, gifted students are handed the task of adjusting to a peer culture that is often ambiguous if not downright hostile to those with intellectual talent. In this second view, counseling for gifted is regarded as a specialty. Counselors need to be aware of those unique needs of gifted students as they try to navigate the challenges of their development and the challenges of an environment of confusing and mixed messages. The assumption in this view is that while the majority of gifted students will and do make satisfactory psychological adjustment, there is a sizeable minority that are psychologically at risk and need counseling that is focused on their needs (Colangelo & Assouline, 2000).

My contention is that the latter view is more helpful and accurate. From my experience and research, gifted students do have recurring and significant counseling needs based on their giftedness. The focus of this monograph is on counseling needs of the gifted student and the role of the school counselor in addressing those needs. I recognize that counseling gifted students can take place in private practice and community mental health centers, however, my focus will be on the counseling that can be done in a school setting.

Historical Overview

In an historical overview of counseling gifted students, St. Clair (1989) divided counseling into several areas:

1. Early 1900s – some recognition of the counseling needs of gifted students focusing on the work of Terman and Hollingworth.
2. The 1950s—a nondirective approach to counseling gifted students, which acknowledged the influence of Carl Rogers (Rogers, 1951) on the entire counseling profession.

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[1] Parts of this article are taken from Colangelo, N. (in press). Counseling gifted students. In N. Colangelo & G. A. Davis (Eds.), *Handbook of Gifted Education* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

3. The 1960s—The beginning of counseling gifted students in schools where the role of the school counselor was emphasized in the development of all students with some special attention to gifted students.
4. The 1970s—program development for counseling gifted students emphasized a full fledged program of counseling in schools focusing not only on counseling sessions, but counseling programs, evaluations, and research relating to school counseling.
5. The 1980s—diversity in counseling gifted students indicated a decade of special issues in counseling including a focus on underachievement, females, and minority students. This period was also characterized by diversity in terms of models and approaches to counseling (pp. 99-100).

To St. Clair's review I add the following:

6. The 1990s—counseling gifted, special needs students provided a strong emphasis on gifted students as special needs learners. There was a focus on gifted students who were double labeled (e.g., gifted/learning disabled). There was also a focus on providing programs (counseling and curriculum) that matched the dual exceptionalities of the students (see for example Cash, 1999). A focus on families and sexual identity issues were also important trends in this decade (Colangelo & Assouline, 2000).
7. The 2000s and beyond—in the next decade I anticipate a sharper focus on ethics and moral issues as well as the continued focus on the emotional intelligence of students. In addition there will be an expanding focus on moral issues and on international issues, as the vision of giftedness will include a global perspective. The NAGC book by Neihart, Reis, Robinson, and Moon (2002) titled *The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know?* is a marker for the new century's attention to counseling needs.

An historical overview of counseling with gifted students will help set the present-day context. The gifted-child movement in the United States can be traced back to Lewis M. Terman, whose pioneering longitudinal study of 1,528 gifted children formed the project titled *Genetic Studies of Genius* (Burks, Jensen, & Terman, 1930; Terman, 1925; Terman & Oden, 1947, 1959). The Terman studies grounded the study of giftedness in an empirical and a psychometric tradition and dispelled negative myths and traditions regarding gifted children. For example, Terman and his colleagues showed that gifted children were physically superior and psychologically and socially more stable than their intellectually average peers.

Because Terman's studies seemed to provide evidence that concern for gifted students' social/psychological needs was not necessary, any initial focus on counseling for gifted students was essentially derailed. Terman's sample was identified by use of the Stanford-Binet intelligence test, and his sample was nearly exclusively White and middle-class youngsters (Holahan & Sears, 1995). The original group recommended for the Stanford-Binet testing was picked by teachers, and some teacher biases probably entered into the selection process even before the standardized testing. Since the sample from Terman's seminal studies is no longer considered representative of the broader gifted population, it is no longer valid to assume that there is a general absence of concern for the social-emotional well-being of gifted students.

Further, although Terman erased a number of myths, he created others, most notably the myth that gifted children are uniformly well adjusted and therefore do not need counseling services. Thus, counselors and those in related professions were not an integral

part of gifted education during its early development (Kerr, 1986; Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1982).

Leta Hollingworth (1926, 1942) was the first to contribute evidence indicating that gifted children do have social and emotional needs meriting attention and the regular school environment did not meet the educational needs of the gifted. Rather, she wrote that the school environment was more likely to lead to apathy for these youngsters. She anticipated some of the emotional difficulties and peer problems that receive attention today, noting that there is often a gap between a gifted student's intellectual and emotional development.

The 1950s witnessed some major attention to counseling gifted students and the establishment of research and guidance programs such as Wisconsin Guidance Laboratory for Superior Students, the Guidance Institute for Talented Students (GIFTS), and Talented Youth Project. The 1960s and 1970s also witnessed increased sensitivity to issues dealing with gifted women, minorities, and disadvantaged students, and counseling needs.

The 1980s saw the establishment of the Supporting the Emotional Needs of Gifted (SENG) program with its focus on addressing the counseling and psychological needs of gifted students, Kerr's Guidance Laboratory for Gifted and Talented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Myers & Pace, 1986), Silverman's Gifted Child Development Center in Denver, and the comprehensive Connie Belin National Center for Gifted Education (renamed The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development in 1995). The Belin-Blank Center has a strong focus on personal counseling, career guidance, family counseling, and psychological assessment.

Self-Concept

The interest in self-concept, which by no means was initiated in the 1990s, has seen a very powerful revival during that decade. Almost everything good in school life seems related to a positive self-concept and almost all that is at risk has at least an aspect of negative self-concept associated with it. Dawes (1998) indicated that pop psychology associates positive mental health with self-esteem (i.e., self-concept). His brief review indicates that there are a number of destructive behaviors that are done by adolescents and adults who seem to have quite positive evaluations of themselves. His insightful comments at least give cause to consider that simply having high self-esteem/self-concept does not assure prosocial behavior and that we must consider that students with high (positive) self-concepts may also perform actions with negative consequences.

The self-concept construct has deep historical roots in psychology and education. The self-concept can be viewed as a "powerful system of cognitive structures that is quite likely to mediate interpretation of and response to events and behaviors directed at or involving the individual" (Nurius, 1986, p. 435). The definition of self-concept has evolved from a "collection of self-views" (e.g., Rogers, 1951; Snygg & Combs, 1949) to general good and bad feelings about oneself (McGuire, 1984; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976) to recent theory and research on operationally defining the structures and contents of the self-concept (Colangelo & Assouline, 1995; Marsh, 1990; Nurius, 1986). Neihart (1999) states that self-concept is the collection of ideas that one has about oneself, an essential component of what is usually called personality.

Self-concept of gifted youngsters has received considerable attention the past two decades (Neihart et al., 2002; Plucker & Stocking, 2001). Neihart (1999) indicates that a number of studies have concluded that there are no differences between gifted and nongifted

students; however, a number of studies have concluded differences in favor of gifted students, particularly when measuring assessment of one's academic abilities. These studies typically have investigated (a) how gifted and average children's self-concepts compare (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Karnes & Wherry, 1981; Kelly & Colangelo, 1984; Loeb & Jay 1987), (b) whether self-concept is a developmental construct (Harter, 1982; Hoge & McSheffrey, 1991; Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Karnes & Wherry, 1981; Marsh, 1992, 1993), and (c) how programming affects a child's self-concept (Kelly & Colangelo, 1984; Loeb & Jay, 1987; Maddux, Scheiber, & Bass, 1982).

Self-concept and giftedness represent complex constructs, and the study of each is made more difficult by theoretical controversies within each field. For example, the developmental nature and processes of self-concept have been debated (Harter, 1982; Karnes & Wherry, 1981; Ketcham & Snyder, 1977). Additionally, there are concerns about the reliability and validity of measures of self-concept (Marsh, 1990, 1993, 1994; Wylie, 1989). In the area of gifted education, the question of uni-dimensionality versus multi-dimensionality has also permeated almost every aspect of the field.

Research lends credibility to the multidimensional nature of self-concept (see also, Plucker & Stocking, 2001). In a research study investigating the self-concept of 563 gifted students spanning grades 3-11, Colangelo and Assouline, 1995 found support for the general notion that the overall self-concept of gifted students is positive. However, there were peaks and valleys across the grade levels and the various domains, as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. Most importantly for school counselors were the following findings:

1. General self-concept scores were high for elementary, middle, and high school students; however, high school students had the lowest scores. High school girls, in particular had the most significant drop in self-concept scores.
2. As gifted students progress in school they become more anxious and feel more isolated.
3. The lowest scores of the 563 students in the study were found in the domain of interpersonal skills and self-satisfaction.
4. The highest scores were in the domain of intellectual and school status.

Closely related to self-concept is the attitude that gifted students have toward their own giftedness. Three books—*On Being Gifted* (American Association for Gifted Children, 1978), *Gifted Children Speak Out* (Delisle, 1984), and *Gifted Kids Speak Out* (Delisle, 1987)—present testimonials from gifted children describing the impact of giftedness on their lives.

One conclusion that can be drawn from these testimonials is that these children have mixed feelings about their giftedness. Research has provided some confirmation of this ambivalence. Colangelo and Kelly (1983) found that while gifted youngsters were positive about their being labeled gifted, they perceived nongifted peers and teachers as having negative views of them. A study by Kerr, Colangelo, and Gaeth (1988) indicated that the attitude of gifted adolescents toward their own giftedness was multifaceted. Adolescents reported that being gifted was a positive in terms of their own personal growth and in terms of academics, but in terms of peer relations, they reported it to be a negative. In a partial replication of the Kerr, Colangelo, and Gaeth study, Monaster, Chan, Walt, and Wiehe (1994) supported the finding that attitudes toward giftedness are multifaceted. In addition, Monaster and colleagues found that those who knew the gifted child well had positive attitudes toward the child, and that attitudes became more negative toward giftedness as respondents were removed from personal knowledge of a gifted youngster.

These findings are very relevant for school counselors because the issues focus on human interaction. In individual counseling sessions, counselors can discuss issues such as: What does it mean to be gifted? What do I like about being gifted? What do I not like about being gifted? If I were not gifted, what would be better for me? If I were not gifted, what would be worse for me?

Personal Perspective

As a nation we are overly concerned with self-concept. We have made attaining a high (positive) self-concept an end goal rather than an outcome of meaningful accomplishment. American education has fostered developing high self-concept as an end goal and that from such a position, other valuable behaviors and attitudes will emanate. For a critical but insightful review of the role and effects of self-concept, see Ravitch (2000).

I agree that counseling should focus on helping gifted students feel positive about accomplishments and effort at meaningful tasks. However, gifted students see through the veil of false praise. They set high standards and we should encourage these standards even when students are not always successful in meeting them. I would rather see a gifted student struggle in an advanced or honors class than receive a high grade in a class below his/her ability level. Appropriate challenge is invigorating. As a counselor, the problem I see with gifted students is not rampant perfectionism (there are perfectionistic tendencies) but the fear of parents and teachers that gifted students will fail at some task and thus have their self-concept threatened. All useful accomplishments in the sciences, arts, or any field of endeavor are strewn with failure along the way. I counsel students to respect striving for the goals, as much as achieving the goals.

Career Counseling With Gifted Students

When gifted students are about to graduate high school and begin to plan for a college and career, often parents and educators get involved to be sure that the student does not waste the gift. From my experience with this phenomenon, not wasting the gift translates into making a decision that is reasonable to the adult. Without articulating specifics, it seems there are a number of adults who believe certain careers are worthy of a gifted student, and certain ones are not. Medical doctor, lawyer, engineer, and physicist typically fall into the category of worthy, while elementary/secondary school teacher, social worker, school counselor, and nurse typically fall into a less worthy category.

Career planning for high ability students has not always been smooth (Kaufmann, 1981; Kerr, 1985, 1991, 1998). Gifted students do not always know what they want to do for the rest of their lives and while they may have the academic credentials to succeed in classes, this does not mean that they have the information to plan for a career. Ability and ambition do not always translate into planned or purposeful action.

Multipotentiality

One of the most written about concepts in the giftedness literature is multipotentiality (Neihart et al., 2002; Sajjadi, Rejskind, & Shore, 2001, Shute, 1999). As the term implies, it refers to individuals who have diverse talents and interests and who could succeed at a high level in a number of different fields. The problem is how to make a decision, how to choose a path, from so many realistic possibilities? While this may seem a problem one would gladly suffer, it is a significant problem for gifted students.

"Multipotentialed young people may anguish over an abundance of choices available to them during career planning unless appropriate interventions are available" (Rysiew, Shore, & Leeb, 1998, p. 423). The most useful definition of multipotentiality comes from Frederickson and Rothney (1972), "the ability to select and develop any number of competencies to a high level" (p. vii). Without the stipulation of developing competencies *at a very high level*, the concept of multipotentiality loses any sense of meaningfulness. Most educators in the field of gifted education adhere to the belief of multipotentiality. While there has been some discussion that the term should be reserved for abilities and not interests (see Rysiew, Shore, & Carson, 1994), there has been little disagreement as to the existence and importance of this concept in understanding giftedness.

Where there has been an absence of empirical data supporting the notion of multipotentiality, there have been considerable anecdotal and clinical reports regarding the concept (Rysiew, Shore, & Leeb, 1998). The only serious challenge to the usefulness and existence of multipotentiality has come from Achter, Benbow, and Lubinski (1997) and Achter, Lubinski, and Benbow (1996). Also, Sajjadi, Rejskind, and Shore (2001) indicate that while multipotentiality exists with gifted students, it may not be a significant problem for them.

Rysiew, Shore, and Leeb (1998) outline some of the main problems or concerns in dealing with multipotentiality, especially as it deals with career choices:

1. Students find it hard to narrow their choices to one career since they have so many equally viable options.
2. Multipotential students may also suffer from perfectionism, thus they look for the perfect or ideal career.
3. Students feel coerced from parents and others to make decisions based on status and high earning potential.
4. Students must make commitments that may have long-term schooling (graduate, professional) and a delay of independence in terms of earning a salary as well as starting families. These long-term training investments are also emotionally perhaps, or financially difficult to change once a student has embarked for several years towards a particular career, even if there are serious doubts about the chosen career path.

Rysiew, Shore, and Leeb (1998) review a number of writings regarding what counselors can do to help multipotential gifted students with career decisions. Among the recommendations are:

1. Remind students that they do not have to limit themselves to one career.
2. Use leisure activities as a way to continually develop areas of abilities and interest, apart from one's career.
3. Use career counseling as a value-based activity, exploring broad categories of life satisfaction.
4. Emphasize peer discussions and group work with other multipotential youth so that one can see that he/she is not alone with concerns.

Since 1988, the students selected for the Belin-Blank Center programs have participated in a Counseling Lab for Career Development. This career development program incorporates the recommendations listed by Rysiew, Shore, and Leeb (1998). In particular, the values-based component of the Counseling Lab for Career Development has proven highly successful with secondary students.

Personal Perspective

High school graduation is a major transition for gifted students. Virtually everyone has expectations for them and depending on where the student will attend and the major, it is easy to disappoint those who think "you could have done better."

High school counselors need to recognize that for most gifted students, college (the vast majority do attend college) will be a positive experience. There will be greater academic challenges and, if anything, the social challenges and stereotypes will diminish. This is good news and career counseling should be presented in this light.

Counselors also need to help students plan for the long haul, since research evidence indicates that gifted students will likely go to graduate and professional schools. These students need to commit themselves to long-term goals if they want to fully develop their talents. It may seem too far in the future, but effective counseling and mentoring need to emphasize that important goals are worth the effort and time. Lastly, counselors need to help their students focus on what *they* want to accomplish. There will be no shortage of people who will provide unsolicited advice on what should be done with such potential.

Counseling With Families

The family has been recognized as a primary and critical component in the development of talent and the success of children in school. Bloom's (Bloom, 1985; Bloom & Sosniak, 1981) seminal work on talent development made a compelling case for the demands on, as well as the influences of, the family on the development of talent. Although research and writings on families of gifted students have increased in the last two decades (see reviews by Colangelo & Assouline, 1993; Moon & Hall, 1998; Neihart et al., 2002), counseling with families is still an area of exceptional need and challenge.

In the special anniversary issue of *Roeper Review*, it was emphasized that one of the most significant trends in gifted education over the next 10 years would be a focus on families (Colangelo, 1988). Although there has been an increase in counseling families, counselors and therapists who work with families of gifted children rarely have expertise in the area of giftedness (Moon & Hall, 1998; Wendorf & Frey, 1985). Their expertise is in family counseling.

A major review of family issues was done in 1983 by Colangelo and Dettmann. Recently, the major review on family counseling and family therapy has been done by Moon and Hall (1998). A summary of the findings by Moon and Hall (1998) includes:

1. Parents of gifted have unique stressors and concerns brought about by the unique cognitive and personality characteristics of gifted children.
2. Parenting styles tend to be child-centered, with high expectations for education and achievement, and a value of cultural and intellectual activities.
3. While families of gifted children have been found to have generally close relationships, with flexibility and bonding, others have been found to experience stress, disorganization, and dysfunctional interactions.
4. Family therapists, while they are experts in family dynamics, do not have the expertise regarding the unique cognitive and affective characteristics of gifted children. With parents of gifted children seeking guidance about family issues, family therapists (and school counselors) will need to

complement their clinical expertise with knowledge of giftedness so that they can be effective helpers of these parents.

Sibling Relationships and the Label "Gifted"

School counselors should anticipate difficulties in families when a child is first labeled "gifted." It is at this time that the family first needs assistance. From the start, school counselors need to be certain that parents clearly understand why their child has been identified as gifted. Many counselors hold parent discussion groups to clarify this issue. Second, counselors should help families anticipate changes as they attempt to adjust to the label. For siblings, the "gifted" label throws into question their role and their importance in the family (Chamrad, Robinson, Treder, & Janos, 1995; Neihart et al., 2002).

Cornell and Grossberg (1986) found that in families with labeled gifted children, the non-labeled children are more prone to personality adjustment problems. Grenier (1985) reported increased competition and diminished cooperation by non-labeled siblings (see review by Jenkins-Friedman, 1992; Moon, & Hall, 1998). The good news is that the family will become accustomed to the label and positive adjustments are likely over time (Colangelo & Brower, 1987).

Counselors can effectively ease the initial strain and disruption by helping the family communicate openly about the gifted label. Also, families simply alerted to likely changes seem better able to take some strain and disruption in stride and thus appear to adjust even more quickly.

Giftedness as a Family Organizer

In working with families of gifted children, it is fair to ask, "To what extent is any issue simply what all families must confront, and to what extent is this issue unique because of the presence of a gifted child?" Giftedness in many families becomes an organizer—that is, a rationale for understanding behavior and actions (see Jenkins-Friedman, 1992).

In some families, behaviors are tolerated because the parents perceive that "this is how it is with a gifted child," or not tolerated because, "such behavior should not come from a gifted child." The giftedness of a child can structure how parents relate to him or her as well as siblings (Moon & Hall, 1998). Many families feel they must put greater energy and resources into the development of a gifted child's talents. Negatives from such organizers can occur when a family loses balance with regard to the needs of other children. As in any case of exceptionality (e.g., a child with a disability), the exceptionality can organize the energy and resources of a family, at times to the detriment of other aspects of the family.

Family Counseling Program

At The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development (Belin-Blank Center), we have established a family counseling program to respond to the needs of families with a gifted child. The brief counseling approach lasts a maximum of five to six sessions per family. The focus is on helping the family develop its own strengths in the resolution of issues. Families receive services at no cost, and in return for these services they participate in research related to family counseling.

The majority of families who participated in the Belin-Blank Center Clinic sought services for their gifted child's perceived academic underachievement. The perception is an

important concept in the work that we do with families as sometimes it is not so much a case of the student underachieving as an issue regarding expectations.

I have found that although a child's giftedness may be the stated reason for seeking counseling, there often are other issues within these families that have been subsumed under giftedness (e.g., marital discord, alcoholism, delinquency). When this is the case, the families are referred to a family counselor who can provide long-term therapy.

Personal Perspective

I have spent many (and fascinating) hours counseling families of gifted students. I notice an underlying frustration by parents who believe that somehow a gifted child should be able to handle life better and should be more mature than siblings. Counselors working with parents need to help them make explicit their expectations of the gifted child and evaluate how realistic these expectations are. What are typically invisible to the school counselor are the sibling dynamics that are manifested at home. Giftedness is not a problem, but it can cause problems. The nature of siblings is to compare themselves to one another in terms of competence and worth. Nongifted siblings may have to adjust to a younger sibling who is more competent although younger and smaller. My research (Colangelo & Brower, 1987) has indicated siblings work out jealousies, competitions, etc. regarding giftedness, but these can take time. School counselors do *little* family counseling where they get to work with the entire family, so they do not get to see what the family is living. Those counselors who do see an entire family are typically family therapists in private practice. Unfortunately, these therapists are versed in family dynamics, but not in giftedness (see Moon & Hall, 1998) and thus miss opportunities to attend to giftedness as a dynamic in the family. I counsel families with gifted children to seek family therapists who have some knowledge and experience with giftedness.

Parent-School Interactions

One of the most important issues confronting school counselors is the parent-school relationship (Colangelo, 1991; Colangelo & Dettmann, 1983, 1985; Dettmann & Colangelo, 1980; Moon & Hall, 1998; Neihart et al., 2002). The underlying issue regarding this relationship is the role the school should take in providing special educational opportunities for gifted students. Colangelo and Dettmann (1982) developed a counseling model conceptualizing four types of parent-school interactions involving gifted students (Figure 1).

Type I (cooperation) is an interaction based on the attitude by both parents and school that the school should be active in gifted education. The tendency here is for open sharing of information about the child and cooperation between parents and schools. Typically, gifted students are identified and given special educational opportunities commensurate with their needs. The underlying assumption by both parents and schools is that the most effective way to develop exceptional ability is through overt, special educational considerations based upon objective information concerning the students' learning needs (e.g., honors classes, advanced classes, resource rooms, independent projects, ability grouping, and grade skipping).

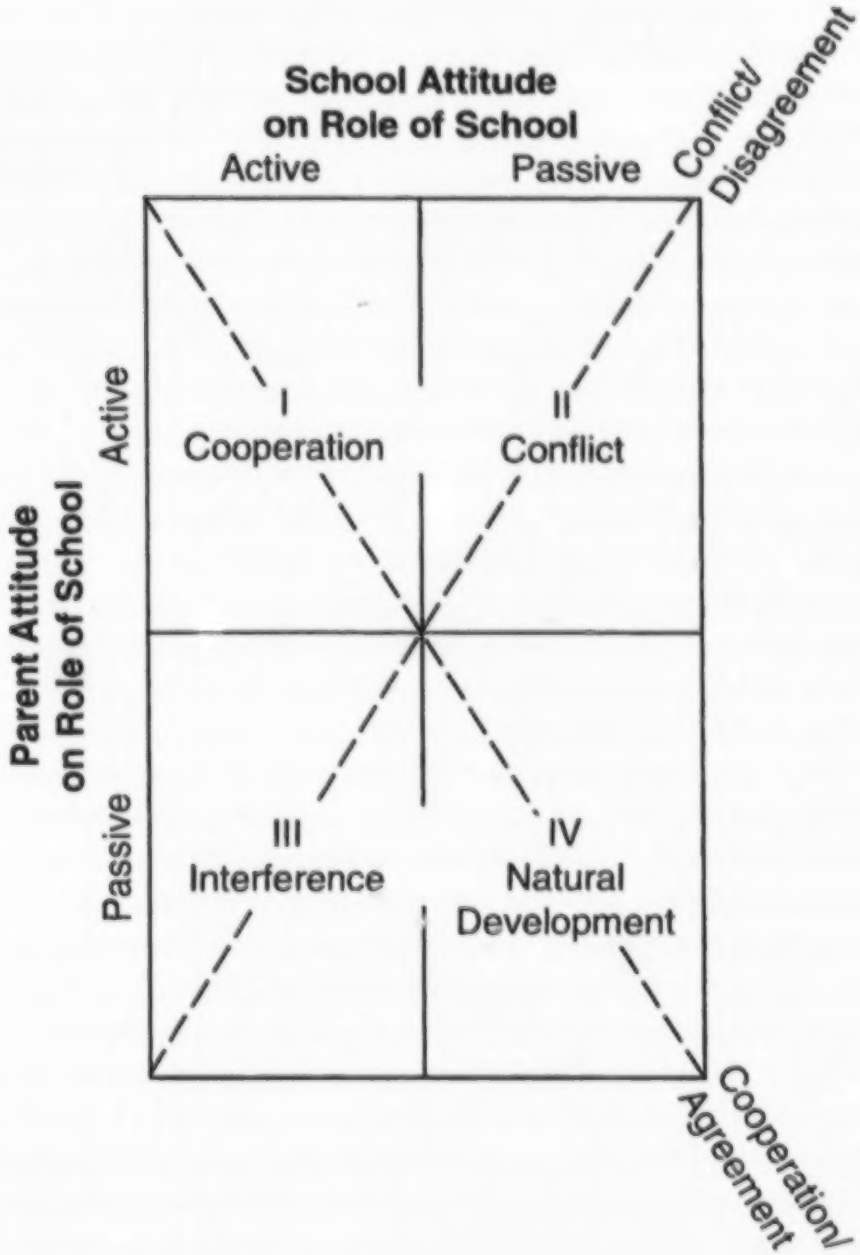

Figure 1. Conceptual model of four types of parent-school interactions involving gifted students.

Source: Reprinted by permission of the authors and publisher from Colangelo N., & Dettmann D. F. (1982). A conceptual model of four types of parent-school interactions, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 5*, 120-126.

Type II (conflict) is an interaction based on conflicting attitudes by (active) parents and a (passive) school regarding the role of the school. Parents believe that their gifted child needs special programming by the school to develop his or her abilities. However, the school believes that the typical school curriculum is adequate to meet the needs of all youngsters, including gifted students. Also, it is typical for the school to believe that special programs should be a priority for students with disabilities. The school in this situation feels that parents are pushy and demand unnecessary attention for gifted youngsters. The parents feel they must be aggressive or the school will ignore the needs of their child.

Type II interactions often are the most difficult for parents and school. These schools tend to view gifted education as an albatross. Parents tend not to support the school and often blame the school for problems their child may have with boredom or lack of motivation and achievement. Parents sometimes encourage the child not to accept the school's evaluations and requirements (e.g., report card grades, classwork) as accurate assessments of his or her abilities.

I have found that parents usually take one of three approaches in this Type II conflict. One is that they continually fight the school. They may either demand meetings for further discussion or join forces with other parents to assert their position. In the second approach, parents take it upon themselves to provide the special programs needed by a child. These may include summer enrichment activities, museum trips, college courses, tutors, mentors, and sometimes, even private schools. Obviously, this approach is limited by educational background and financial resources of the parents. The third approach occurs when parents feel hopeless. They believe that they can have no real effect and that all they can do is complain. For many parents, the end result is a withdrawal from direct communication with the school.

Type III (interference) interactions are also based on conflict, but with a reversal of the dynamics found in Type II. In Type III the school actively wants to provide for the gifted child but the parents do not agree. Parents are unsure if special programs for gifted students are helpful or necessary. They are concerned about what effect identification and labeling may have on their identified gifted child as well as on siblings who may not be identified. Parents may be concerned that special recognition will damage their child's peer relationships. Parents also may view identification and special programs as an interference in the normal educational development of their child. Meanwhile, the school believes that the child does need special consideration and is willing to provide it. Of course, the school staff are often frustrated by the parents' refusal to let their child participate in the school's special program.

Type IV (natural development) interactions are based on agreement by both parents and schools that the role of the school should be passive. This belief is founded on the premise that high ability will take care of itself ("cream rises to the top") and that very little can be done meaningfully to nourish extraordinary ability. Essentially, both parents and schools view the typical school curriculum and extracurricular activities as providing enough challenge and variety to stimulate the development of high potential and ability. In Type IV interactions, parents and schools recognize and support the youngster's efforts, but believe that the natural development of talent will take its course, if the talent is truly there.

Implications of Parent-School Interactions

The model in Figure 1 accounts for both *process* and *outcome*. The process relates to the nature of the interactions—cooperative or conflictual. The outcome relates to the four possible types of interactions when parents and school communicate about the school's role in gifted education.

The model can be used as a diagnostic instrument for helping both parents and school staff understand their interactions. The model also provides counselors with a framework for understanding their interactions with parents and other school staff—thus gaining insight into *how* they will deal with issues regarding programming for gifted children. Counselors can use this model not only to determine the type of interaction that *exists* between the school and parents, but also to assess what type of interaction would be *preferred.*

Underachievement

Perhaps the most intense counseling focus has been on the underachieving gifted student. The issue of underachievement is confusing because of disagreement about its definition and the inconsistency of results from interventions (Delisle, 1992; Dowdall & Colangelo, 1982; Neihart et al., 2002; Peterson & Colangelo, 1996; Reis, 1998, Reis & McCoach, 2000; Whitmore, 1980).

Underachievement is seen as a discrepancy between assessed potential and actual performance. The discrepancy may be between two standardized measures (e.g., IQ and achievement tests) or between a standardized measure and classroom performance (e.g., teacher expectation and performance on daily assignments). The label "gifted underachiever" implies a learner with a high level of potential (Reis, 1998). There are some measures, usually a standardized test, where a student meets the criteria for giftedness, while actual school performance is well below the assessed potential.

There have been a number of attempts to categorize underachievers. Reis (1998) distinguished between chronic and temporary (situational) underachievement. Temporary underachievement is often in response to a situational stress or event (e.g., divorce, loss of a friend, problems with a teacher). A chronic underachiever is one who has a history and a pattern of underachievement, which appear to cut across a particular incident or circumstance (see also Peterson & Colangelo, 1996).

Whitmore (1980) proposed three types of underachievers: aggressive, withdrawn, and rebellious combination. Aggressive students demonstrate disruption and rebellious behaviors; withdrawn underachievers are bored and uninvolved. The third type is a combination in which the underachiever vacillates between aggressive and withdrawn behaviors.

Delisle (1992) proposes the categories of underachiever and non-producer and makes an extensive comparison between the two categories. For counselors, however, the most important distinction revolves around the counseling needs of the student. The non-producer has minimal counseling needs and is the type of student whose non-productive behaviors can be reversed "quickly" with minimal intervention. Underachieving behaviors require an extensive counseling program that may include family counseling. Most significantly, underachievement, according to Delisle, is a problem that demands a long-term solution.

To a school counselor, the discrepancy between scores is not as critical as the interpersonal dynamics involved in underachievement. Rather than looking at it as a psychometric event, it can be seen as a relationship between the gifted student and teachers, parent(s), and sometimes peers. For some gifted students underachievement is a way to express either a need for attention or a need for control over a situation.

Underachievement brings considerable attention from both teachers and parents, in extreme cases almost doting behavior. Adults are so concerned that the gifted youngster will not make good use of his or her gifts that they give a great deal of energy and time to the student (Peterson & Colangelo, 1996).

Counselors can break the attention-getting cycle by having parents and teachers avoid responding too strongly to the underachieving behavior or even ignoring it. They can give attention when the child achieves well and minimize attention when the child is not achieving. The equation is simple. If the child wants attention, he or she will soon learn that the attention is forthcoming only when certain achieving behaviors (and attitudes) are present. The child will want to do more of these kinds of behaviors because the reward is the attention.

A gifted youngster who uses underachievement as a means to gain control of a situation offers a more difficult challenge. For such youngsters, poor achievement is a way to show teachers and parents that they (the students) can do what they want. A typical reaction by teachers and parents to this kind of defiance is to attempt to force the student to do the task and do it at levels comparable to expectation. This situation can lead to a vicious and non-productive power struggle. The counselor can work with teachers and parents to help them quit the fight. It is likely the student will diminish the fight relationship if there is no one with whom to fight.

Minimizing the power struggle will allow more opportunity for the student to perform because he or she is free to do so. Group counseling can help gifted students better understand their behaviors and motives and learn new patterns of interactions. It is in the rich atmosphere of a group of peers with a trained leader (school counselor) that a gifted youngster can explore motives and consequences of underachieving behavior.

Finally, it is important for the school counselor to use school records as a source of information in understanding gifted underachievers, especially at the secondary level. In a comprehensive study of 153 gifted underachievers, grades 7-12, Peterson and Colangelo (1996) found data on attendance, tardiness, course selection, and course grades, by gender and by age, that provided differential patterns that distinguished gifted students who achieved from those who underachieved. Peterson and Colangelo reported that patterns of underachievement established in junior high school, though not impossible to alter in high school, do tend to persist through high school.

While the issues surrounding underachievement are complex and research findings inconclusive and even contradictory, Reis (1998) provides a good summary of the current research on underachievement in the following eight points:

First, it appears that the beginnings of underachievement in many young people occur in elementary school.

Second, underachievement appears to be periodic and episodic, occurring some years and not others and in some classes, but not others.

Third, a direct relationship seems to exist between inappropriate or too-easy content in elementary school and underachievement in middle or high school.

Fourth, parental issues interact with the behaviors of some underachievers, yet no clear pattern exists about the types of parental behaviors that cause underachievement.

Fifth, peers can play a major role in keeping underachievement from occurring in their closest friends, making peer groups an important part of preventing and reversing underachievement.

Sixth, busier adolescents who are involved in clubs, extracurricular activities, sports and religious activities are less likely to underachieve in school.

Seventh, many similar behavioral characteristics are exhibited by bright students who achieve and underachieve in school.

Eight, there are some students who may underachieve as a direct result of an inappropriate and unmotivating curriculum. (p. 23)

Much of the literature on underachievement either states or implies psychological undercurrents (e.g., intrapersonal, interpersonal, and family dynamics). While the psychological issues clearly have been shown to play a role in underachievement, it is critical to note that not all underachievement behaviors have a psychological root.

Dual Exceptionalities

The later 1980s as well as the 1990s brought a new awareness to the field of gifted education: gifted students who also have disabilities, especially learning, developmental, and social-emotional disabilities (see Kaufmann & Castellanos, 2000; Neihart et al., 2002). Dual exceptionalities may include: autistic savant syndrome; developmental delays in speech, language and motor coordination; disruptive behavior (including conduct and oppositional-defiant disorders); anxieties; and eating disorders (Moon & Hall, 1998). Gifted children also may have specific learning disorders (LD), or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) (Kaufmann, Kalbfleisch, & Castellanos, 2000; Zentall, Moon, Hall & Grskovic, 2001).

The most common behavior disorder in gifted children is AD/HD (Moon & Hall, 1998; Zentall et al, 2001), which can interfere with academic and social functioning. For gifted children with LD or AD/HD, individualized testing will reflect patterns of inconsistency across talent areas (Moon & Hall, 1998). Multiple testing methods are typically needed to pinpoint areas of giftedness and disability (Moon & Dillon, 1995).

Dual exceptionality students are at risk for underachievement since they will have barriers to achieving at their level of giftedness. Such students can become easily frustrated (and frustrating) since their inability to perform or behave can bring about questions regarding their motivation and commitment. From observation, it seems dual exceptionalities are more common than most educators may think.

A battery of individualized tests to determine exceptionalities in cases where gifted students are underachieving in academics and unable to function effectively in the classroom is recommended. Dual exceptionalities require a team approach. School psychologists are in the best position to test and diagnose exceptionalities, while the school counselor (at times school social worker) has the expertise for counseling the student and families regarding the dual exceptionalities (Colangelo & Assouline, 2000).

Personal Perspective

Growing up is just not easy. Gifted children and teenagers try to navigate through murky waters and try to read the tell-tale signs of acceptance, success, and good decisions. Some gifted students have unique and at times extra burdens which put them at-risk for succeeding in this process of growing up. I do not underestimate what a counselor can provide a youngster. Not all problems need a solution, but all kids benefit from adult caring and understanding. Counselors can offer perspectives to gifted students that are more insightful and simply correct as compared to advice from other inexperienced peers. Many gifted students do not get enough counselor time unless they are already in trouble. Counselors need expertise in disabilities, ethnic issues, as well as psychological

development. However, without an understanding of the social and psychological effects of giftedness, counselors will only be dealing with *part* of the issues confronting gifted. All counselors by definition are trained in human behavior and development. Very few counselors are trained to understand the intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics of giftedness.

School Counseling Programs for Gifted Students

School-based programs especially in counseling are important to the development of gifted students (see Neihart et al., 2002). There are two ways to envision a school counseling program for gifted students: as remedial or as developmental. In the remedial approach, the emphasis is on problem solving and crisis intervention. In this approach, the counselor is primarily a therapy expert who intervenes in problem situations either to help solve the problem or to minimize the difficulty. The counselor is involved in staffing, referrals, and one-on-one counseling. Where there is group counseling, the students are selected because they share a common problem (e.g., underachievement, behavior problems), and the purpose is to correct the problem.

In the developmental approach, the counselor does use his or her expertise to serve a therapeutic function and is available for problem solving, but therapy and problem solving are not the primary purpose. The real work of the developmentally oriented counselor is to establish an environment in school that is conducive to the educational growth of gifted students. Such an approach is predicated on knowledge of both affective and cognitive needs of gifted youngsters. The focus of individual counseling is to get to know students and help them better understand their own strengths and weaknesses as decision makers and formulators of their lives.

Group counseling focuses on sharing perceptions and learning more effective interpersonal skills. Group members do not necessarily have a common problem to resolve. Work with families is based not on a problem with their child, but on the recognition that gifted children pose unique challenges to parents. Family work is based more on discussion groups with parents in which the parents share information and connect with other families.

A developmental approach to counseling with gifted students is strongly recommended. Giftedness is not a problem to be solved but a unique challenge to be nourished. In a therapy model, evidence of problems would be necessary to justify having a counselor with expertise in working with the gifted. However, a developmental approach does not depend on evidence that gifted youngsters are at risk.

A developmental counseling program requires the following components:

1. An articulated and coherent rationale.
2. A program of activities based on the affective and cognitive needs of youngsters.
3. Trained counselors who are well grounded not only in counseling but also in giftedness.
4. A minimum of attention to rehabilitative (therapy) services, but a strong component of individual, family, and teacher consultations.
5. Input and participation from teachers, administrators, parents, and the youngsters who are served.

6. A component for the continued professional development of the counselor so that he or she may keep pace with the latest research and practices on the counseling needs of gifted youngsters.

Personal Perspective

As a counselor and counselor educator my frustration has been with the minimal attention the counseling field pays to gifted students. Comparatively, there is more attention given to the needs of gifted students by teachers and teacher training programs. (Although this also limited). The research on the counseling needs of gifted has not had significant impact on counselor training institutions, especially programs that train school counselors.

While the remedial work of the counselor has more immediate results and impact, it is the developmental focus that will have the greater systemic and long-term impact. Remedial intervention may help a particular student or family, but a developmental impact would make a school system appropriate to the development of gifted students and indirectly help many students and families. A school that minimizes anti-intellectualism (see Colangelo, 2001) and sets an atmosphere of respect for individual differences and respect for the development of talents, is a manifestation of developmental counseling for the gifted.

Summary

Addressing the counseling needs of gifted students, while never a national priority, has been a continuing part of the field of gifted and talented education for the last three decades. The immediate past years have witnessed a stronger focus on the social-emotional needs of gifted youngsters.

These unique needs exist and interact in the successful or unsuccessful development of talent. Counseling is a necessary component in the successful development of talent. For counselors to be successful, they need knowledge and expertise both in counseling and gifted and talented education. A developmental counseling program in a school will foster both the cognitive and the affective growth of gifted youngsters.

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